

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 275377

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TAGS: CASC, CI (O'FLAHERTY, AMY CONGER)

SUBJECT: W/W CONGER TELEVISION APPEARANCE

1. FOLLOWING IS UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF MS. CONGER'S
APPEARANCE ON NBC'S TODAY SHOW, DECEMBER 13:

2. QUOTE: WALTERS - MANY AMERICANS GO ABROAD TO TRY TO
DO GOOD WORK AND ONE OF THESE IS A SCHOOL TEACHER NAMED
AMY CONGER; SHE WAS FROM SUBURBAN CHICAGO. SHE WENT TO
CHILE IN SOUTH AMERICA WHERE SHE SERVED AS A TEACHER. IN
1973 WHEN THE MARXIST GOVERNMENT OF ALLENDE WAS OVERTHROWN
BY A MILITARISTIC COUP THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED,
INCLUDING MANY AMERICANS, INCLUDING MRS. CONGER. HER STORY
OF WHAT HAPPENED TO HER IN A CHILEAN JAIL IS, TO SAY THE
LEAST, BLOOD CURDLING AND MISS CONGER IS WAITING IN OUR
CHICAGO STUDIO TO TELL US OF THAT EXPERIENCE, SHE IS WITH
NBC NEWS CORRESPONDENT BOB JAMESON.

JAMESON - MRS. CONGER WENT TO CHILE IN APRIL OF 1972 WITH
HER PHYSICIAN HUSBAND WHO HOPED TO PURSUE HIS MEDICAL
CAREER THERE AND SHE WANTED TO PURSUE HER CAREER AS A PRO-
FESSOR OF ART HISTORY. SHE WAS DRAWN TO THAT COUNTRY BY
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 275377

THE PEOPLE OF CHILE, A PEOPLE SHE HAD COME TO LIKE AND
ADMIRE AS SHE MET THEM IN EUROPE IN 1972 ON AN OCEAN

VOYAGE THAT SAME YEAR. BUT IN THE AUTUMN OF THIS YEAR,

1974 AMY CONGER LEFT CHILE. THE REASONS FOR HER DEPARTURE ARE THE SUBJECT OF THIS INTERVIEW. YOU WENT TO CHILE BECAUSE YOU LIKE THE CHILEAN PEOPLE.

CONGER - EXACTLY.

JAMESON - WHAT DREW YOU THERE BEYOND THAT?

CONGER - WELL IT IS A SPANISH SPEAKING COUNTRY, THE PEOPLE ARE VERY EXCEPTIONAL AND THERE WERE MANY JOB OPPORTUNITIES THERE ESPECIALLY FOR DOCTORS WHICH DID NOT EXIST IN ARGENTINA AT THAT TIME.

JAMESON - THERE WAS NO IDEOLOGICAL REASON, NO POLITICAL REASON?

CONGER - NO.

JAMESON - WHAT WAS LIFE LIKE UNDER THE ALLENDE REGIME?

CONGER - WELL, IT WAS TOTALLY DIFFERENT THAN TODAY IN CHILE. THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. IT WAS AN EXTREMELY DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM. IT IS ONE OF THE OLDEST DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS IN S.A. AND YOU WERE FREE TO SAY WHATEVER YOU WANTED TO AND DO WHATEVER YOU WANTED TO DO. OF COURSE, WITHIN CERTAIN LIMITATIONS.

JAMESON - WE WERE GIVEN THE IMPRESSION THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL OF TURMOIL AND UNREST SHORTLY BEFORE THE COUP AND FOR SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE THE COUP. WHAT WAS IT LIKE THERE THEN?

CONGER - AT THE TIME OF THE COUP?

JAMESON - BEFORE THE COUP.

CONGER - WELL THE COUNTRY WAS GREATLY AFFECTED BY THE UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 275377

TRUCK DRIVERS' STRIKE, WHICH WAS ONE OF THE LAST ELEMENTS BEFORE THE COUP. IT WAS A LITTLE BIT DIFFICULT TO GET FOOD; THE TRANSPORTATION WASN'T VERY GOOD. THERE WAS QUITE A BIT OF CONFUSION.

JAMESON - AFTER THE COUP WAS THERE A NIGHT AND DAY CHANGE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE?

CONGER - ABSOLUTELY BECAUSE THIS WAS THE FIRST GOVERNMENT IN CHILE IN A LONG TIME THAT HAD NOT BEEN DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED. AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE COUP THE MILITARY PUT OUT A SERIES OF LAWS WHICH IMMEDIATELY WERE HIGHLY RE-PRESSIVE. THEY STARTED BURNING BOOKS, ANY TYPE OF LEFTIST

BOOK, ANY BOOKS WHICH WEREN'T EVEN LEFTIST WHICH SPOKE ABOUT THE IDEOLOGICAL REVOLUTION, THEY BURNT THEM BECAUSE THEY USED THE WORD REVOLUTION. THERE ARE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE INDUSTRY BURNING BOOKS. EVEN TODAY, REALLY, THERE ISN'T THE FREEDOM OF PRESS WHICH EXISTED UNDER THE ALLENDE REGIME. PEOPLE CAN NOT SPEAK FREELY IN THE STREETS, THEY CAN'T ASSEMBLE AND IN THE UNIVERSITY YOU CAN'T HAVE FOUR PEOPLE SITTING TOGETHER BECAUSE THAT IS ALREADY AN ASSEMBLY. YOU FIND UNIVERSITIES HAVE GENERALLY BEEN MILITARIZED, YOU FIND PLAIN CLOTHES MEN IN CLASS-ROOMS, PEOPLE THERE LISTENING IN ORDER TO REPORT. THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM HAS BEEN TOTALLY DESTROYED. THE CONGRESSMEN -- THE CONGRESS DOESN'T EXIST --A GREAT MANY OF THE CONGRESSMEN HAVE BEEN FORCED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY, THERE ARE TWO CHILEAN CONGRESSMEN IN THIS COUNTRY NOW. GLADYS MARIN AND PEDRO URRA AND FOR EXAMPLE MANY OF THE CONGRESSMEN ARE IN JAIL. JORGE MONTES IS IN CRITICAL CONDITION.

JAMESON - YOU WERE AN AMERICAN NATIONAL TEACHING IN THE UNIVERSITY. I BELIEVE YOU TOLD ME YOU SAW THE NUMBER OF INSTRUCTORS IN THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT REDUCED FROM 72 TO 8.

CONGER - EXACTLY

JAMESON - AFTER THE COUP

CONGER - WELL CERTAIN DEPARTMENTS HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 275377

CLOSED; SUCH AS SOCIAL WORK, SOCIAL SCIENCES, EDUCATION-- THINGS OF THIS NATURE.

JAMESON - YOU ALSO HAD AN EXPERIENCE WITH THE MILITARY SEVERAL MONTHS BEFORE YOU WERE ARRESTED IN CHILE.

CONGER - THE MILITARY WERE CALLED BY OUR LANDLADY BECAUSE SHE HAD WANTED TO RAISE THE RENT TEN TIMES AND IT WAS JUST TOO MUCH. SO SHE DECIDED THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY TO GET US OUT OF THE HOUSE WAS TO CALL THE MILITARY AND SO THE MILITARY CAME.

JAMESON - IT WAS HER INTEREST TO REMOVE YOU FROM THE HOUSE AND RENT IT AT A HIGHER RENT.

CONGER - EXACTLY -- AND SHE FIGURED THIS WAS A VERY EFFICIENT SYSTEM FOR GETTING FOREIGNERS OUT OF HER HOUSE. AND ANOTHER TIME THE MILITARY STOPPED ME BECAUSE I AM THE FRIEND OF A LAWYER, A WOMAN WHO WORKS FOR THE STATE MINING COMPANY AND SHE IS THE AUNT BY MARRIAGE OF SOMEONE THEY WERE LOOKING FOR. SO THEY HAD ARRESTED HER AND SHE HAD JUST SAID THAT I WAS A FRIEND, SO THEY CAME TO ARREST ME

ASSUMING THAT I SHOULD KNOW WHERE THE PERSON THEY WERE
LOOKING FOR WAS.

JAMESON - BUT YOU WERE RELEASED THEN?

CONGER - YES.

JAMESON - AND YOU WERE RELEASED BECAUSE THE POLICE COULD
NOT AGREE WHO WAS IN CHARGE?

CONGER - EXACTLY. THEY WERE DISCUSSING AMONG THEMSELVES
AND COULD NOT FIGURE OUT WHO WAS IN CHARGE.

JAMESON - THAT BRINGS US TO OCTOBER OF THIS YEAR. WHAT
HAPPENED THEN.

CONGER - WELL ON OCTOBER 11TH THE -- I WAS COMING BACK TO
MY HOUSE AND I HAD PARKED THE CAR IN THE STREET AND I WAS
ABOUT TO GET OUT OF THE CAR WHEN FOUR MEN RAN UP TO THE
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PAGE 05 STATE 275377

CAR WITH SUBMACHINE GUNS. THEY STUCK THE SUBMACHINE GUNS
IN THE CAR IN MY FACE. IT SORT OF SCARED ME. THE FIRST
THING THEY SCREAMED WAS, DON'T MOVE AND RIGHT AWAY SOME-
ONE SCREAMED GET YOUR HANDS UP AND I THOUGHT IF I PUT MY
HANDS UP THEY WILL SHOOT ME FOR MOVING. SO I JUST SAT
THERE. THEY PULLED ME OUT OF THE CAR AND THEY HANDCUFFED
ME AND THEY PUSHED ME AROUND AND THREATENED TO KILL ME.
AND THEN THEY BROUGHT ME INTO THE HOUSE AND THEY TORE THE
HOUSE APART A LITTLE BIT THREATENING TO KILL ME, ASKING
FOR THE WEAPONS WHICH OF COURSE HAD NEVER EXISTED AND THEN
THEY BROUGHT ME OUT TO THE AIRFORCE ACADEMY.

JAMESON - AT THE POINT AT WHICH YOU WERE ARRESTED THEY
WANTED SOMETHING FROM YOU.

CONGER - WELL THEY WANTED WEAPONS BUT I NEVER HAD WEAPONS
AT ANYTIME IN MY LIFE.

JAMESON - THE ALSO WANTED A CONFESSION, DID THEY NOT?

CONGER - WELL AFTER WHILE THEY DECIDED THEY WANTED A
CONFESSION. THE CONFESSION WAS WANTED TO WAVE IN THE
FACE OF PEOPLE AND THE IDEA WAS THAT IF I WOULD WRITE A
CONFESSION THEN I'LL HAVE HAD PRIVILEGE OF BEING THROWN
OUT OF THE COUNTRY.

JAMESON - THEN FOR ONE WEEK YOU WERE TORTURED.

CONGER - TORTURED -- FOR FIFTEEN DAYS I WAS AT THE AIR-
FORCE ACADEMY. THEY THREATENED ME WITH DEATH, WITH RAPE,
THROWING ME DOWN ON A BED AND WERE SENDING TO THE DINA

WHICH WAS A MILITARY UNIT WHICH SPECIALIZED IN TORTURE.
-- ELECTRIC SHOCK AND SIMULATED DROWNINGS IN EXCREMENT
..... I WAS WILLING TO SAY ANYTHING RATHER THAN GO TO THE
DINA.

JAMESON - BUT WHAT WAS DONE TO YOU AT THE AIRFORCE
ACADEMY?

CONGER - WELL THEY -- BESIDES THE THREATS I WAS, YOU KNOW,
SOME PEOPLE CALL IT TORTURE, BADLY TREATED -- THEY HAD
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PAGE 06 STATE 275377

ME PRESENT WHEN THEY WERE TORTURING OTHER PEOPLE SO THAT
I COULD SEE THE EFFECT IT HAD, SO I COULD SEE WHAT WOULD
HAPPEN AND I SAW OTHER PEOPLE THAT HAD BEEN TORTURED
AT THE SAME TIME. AND ALL THIS IN A COUNTRY WHERE THEY
PROMISE THAT TORTURE DOESN'T EXIST.

JAMESON - YOU WERE PHYSICALLY MISTREATED.

CONGER - EXACTLY -- I WAS BLINDFOLDED AND LEAD BY TWO
GUARDS, THEY LEAD YOU UP THE STAIRS AND LET YOU FALL
DOWN A FLIGHT OF STAIRS. THEY PUT YOU IN A CHAIR SET
IN SUCH A POSITION THAT THE CHAIR WILL FALL DOWN. THEY
ARE ALWAYS PUSHING YOU AROUND, PUSH YOU ON TOP OF A BED
OR PUSHING YOU DOWN THE STAIRS OR JUST ANYWHERE. THEY
DEPRIVE YOU OF SLEEP, THEY KEEP WAKING YOU UP WHEN YOU
TRY TO SLEEP. THEY DEPRIVE YOU OF WATER, FOOD AND SO
I LOST ABOUT TEN POUNDS IN THIRTEEN DAYS WHICH IS A
NICE CRASH DIET.

JAMESON - WHAT WAS THE JAIL LIKE?

CONGER - WELL, THERE WERE ABOUT SIXTY PEOPLE THERE.
EVERYBODY WAS IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT MORE OR LESS --
YOU CAN'T SEE, YOU ARE BLINDFOLDED AND YOU CAN'T

SPEAK. IT WAS PRETTY FILTHY, I MEAN BLOOD, EXCREMENT, FLIES
- I WAS THERE ONLY THIRTEEN DAYS, THERE WERE PEOPLE THAT
HAD BEEN THERE EIGHT MONTHS. I LOST TEN POUNDS IN
THIRTEEN DAYS--IMAGINE EIGHT MONTHS.

JAMESON - FINALLY SOMEONE REACHED THE AMERICAN CONSULATE.

CONGER - IN A VERY ROUND ABOUT FASHION.

JAMESON - IT IS YOUR BELIEF THAT THE AMERICAN CONSULATE
KNEW FOR THIRTY HOURS BEFORE THEY HELPED YOU GET RELEASED.
IN THAT CASE WHAT IS THE HOPE OF AN AMERICAN NATIONAL
WHO GETS IN TROUBLE IN CHILE?

CONGER - WELL, I ASKED CONTINUALLY FROM THE FIRST

MOMENT TO BE ALLOWED TO SEE THE CONSUL AND THIS MADE
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 07 STATE 275377

THEM TERRIBLE ANGRY. THEY WOULD BE TERRIBLY IRRITATED
EVERY TIME I ASKED. AND THEY WOULD STAND THERE AND EX-
PLAIN HOW THEY HATED AMERICANS.

JAMESON - AND IT IS YOUR BELIEF THAT THE AMERICAN CONSUL-
ATE REALLY DIDN'T WANT TO HELP?

CONGER - WELL HE GOT THERE WITHIN THIRTY HOURS.UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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